

**RECOMMENDATION ON THE VARIANCE APPLICATION OF
Secaucus/Washington Hook & Ladder Fire House Addition - Variance
File #12-371**

I. INTRODUCTION

An application for three bulk variances has been filed with the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission (NJMC) by David B. Drumeler, Esq., on behalf of the Town of Secaucus, for the premises located at 272 County Avenue, Block 42, Lots 12 and 13, in the Town of Secaucus, New Jersey. Said premises are located in the Commission's Neighborhood Commercial zone. The variances are sought in connection with the applicant's proposal to construct a two-story, 5,550 square-foot building addition, which has a footprint of 2,795 square feet, to the Washington Hook & Ladder Company #1 facility, along with associated site improvements on the subject properties.

Specifically, the applicant is requesting relief as follows:

1. N.J.A.C. 19:4-5.43(a)1, which permits a maximum lot coverage of 40 percent. A lot coverage of 51 percent is proposed.
2. N.J.A.C. 19:4-8.4(a)28, which requires one parking space per employee on the shift of maximum employment and one parking space per facility vehicle for essential public service uses. No on-site parking spaces are proposed.
3. N.J.A.C. 19:4-8.3(b)1, which prohibits loading in any front yard. Two loading doors are proposed in the front yard facing County Avenue.

Notice was given to the public and all interested parties as required by law. Public notice of this application was published in The Jersey Journal and the Secaucus Home News newspapers. No written comments regarding this application were received by the Division of Land Use Management during the

public comment period. All information submitted to the Division of Land Use Management relative to this application is made part of the record of this recommendation.

II. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Existing and Proposed Use

The properties in question consist of approximately 0.24 acres. They contain frontage on both County Avenue to the north and Lincoln Avenue to the west. A residential use is located to the south of the subject properties. A mixed-use, residential/commercial property is located east of the site.

Lot 13 is currently improved with a two-story, brick essential public services facility, which serves as a fire station, with a footprint of approximately 2,650 square feet. Direct access to Lot 13 is provided from County Avenue and Lincoln Avenue by driveways located to the north and west of the existing building, respectively. Lot 12, which is located east of Lot 13, is presently undeveloped. Direct access to Lot 12 is provided from County Avenue by a driveway located on the northerly portion of the site.

The applicant is proposing to construct a two-story, 5,550 square-foot building addition to the existing fire station, along with associated site improvements. The proposed building addition will have a footprint of 2,795 square feet, which will increase the overall lot coverage on the subject properties from 25 percent to a nonconforming 51 percent. The proposed addition will contain two apparatus bays for the storage of fire trucks, which will enter and exit the northerly portion of the new building addition through a 32-foot by 14-foot overhead door facing the County Avenue right-of-way. No on-site parking will be provided. An existing curb cut on Lincoln Avenue is proposed to be removed.

The applicant also proposes to form a zoning lot of record joining Block 42, Lots 12 and 13 for zoning purposes.

B. Response to the Public Notice

No written comments or objections were received during the public comment period.

III. PUBLIC HEARING (August 14, 2012)

A public hearing was held on Tuesday, August 14, 2012. NJMC staff in attendance were Sara Sundell, P.E., P.P., Director of Land Use Management and Chief Engineer; Mia Petrou, P.P., AICP, Senior Planner; and Ronald Seelogy, P.E., Senior Engineer.

A. Exhibits

The following is a list of the exhibits submitted by the applicant to the NJMC regarding the variance request:

<u>Number</u>	<u>Description</u>
A-1	Color rendering of existing and proposed site plan, prepared by Minervini Vandermark Architecture, undated.
A-2	Plan set prepared by Minervini Vandermark Architecture, dated March 1, 2012, revised March 30, 2012, containing the following drawings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Existing Survey," Drawing Number A-100;• "Site Landscaping and Lighting Plan," Drawing Number A-101;• "Second Floor Plan," Drawing Number A-202;• "Roof Plan & Roof Details," Drawing Number A-203;• "North and West Building Elevations," Drawing Number A-300; and• "South and East Building Elevations," Drawing Number A-301.

- A-3 Three-dimensional color rendering of building elevations, prepared by Minervini Vandermark Architecture, undated.
- A-4 "First Floor Plan," Drawing Number A-201, prepared by Minervini Vandermark Architecture, dated March 1, 2012, revised March 30, 2012.

B. Testimony

The applicant was represented at the hearing by David B. Drumeler, Esq. The following witness testified in support of the application:

1. Anthony C. Vandermark, Jr. AIA, Minervini Vandermark Architecture.

Staff findings and recommendations are based on the entire record. A transcript of the public hearing was prepared and transcribed by Susan Bischoff, Certified Court Reporter.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

A. Standards for the Granting of a Bulk Variance from the Provisions of N.J.A.C. 19:4-5.43(a)1, which permits a maximum lot coverage of 40 percent. A lot coverage of 51 percent is proposed.

The NJMC Zoning Regulations at N.J.A.C. Section 19:4-4.14(e) state in part that, *a variance shall not be granted unless specific written findings of fact directly based upon the particular evidence presented are made that support conclusions that...*

1. *Concerning bulk variances:*
 - i. *The variance requested arises from such condition that is unique to the property in question, is not ordinarily found in the same zone, and is not created by any action of the property owner or the applicant.*

The requested variance to construct an addition to the existing fire station resulting in an overall lot coverage of 51 percent, whereas a maximum lot coverage of 40 percent is permitted, arises from conditions that are unique to the site and not created by the property owner. The existing fire station on the site was constructed in 1910, prior to the establishment of NJMC regulations. The location of the existing building and loading areas presents challenges to providing a conforming and functional building addition of adequate size to house and maintain new fire trucks.

The property is a corner lot and therefore has two front yards, with frontage on both County Avenue and Lincoln Avenue. The property consists of two lots, each approximately 5,328 square feet (0.12 acres) in area, which together comprise 10,656 square feet (0.24 acres). The premises will require lot consolidation to facilitate the proposed development, as an interior lot line runs through the proposed addition and divides the site.

Lot 13 is occupied by an existing 4,156 square-foot fire station constructed in 1910. Lot coverage for Lot 13 is a pre-existing nonconforming condition, as the existing fire station, which has a footprint of 2,650 square feet, covers approximately 50 percent of Lot 13 and exceeds the zone's maximum lot coverage of 40 percent. The growth of residential development in south Secaucus along Meadowland Parkway and within the X-change Plaza development has created the need for additional emergency services and has rendered the existing fire station obsolete in many ways. The proposed building addition meets all required front, side, and rear

yard setbacks and has been designed to accommodate two 9-foot wide by 47-foot long fire trucks. The proposed addition would result in a more efficient operation satisfying the time-critical nature of emergency calls. Therefore, the uniqueness of the facility and its operations results in a need for additional square footage to accommodate the increased need for emergency services.

- ii. The granting of the variance will not adversely affect the rights of neighboring property owners or residents.*

The granting of the requested lot coverage variance will not adversely affect the rights of neighboring property owners. The proposed addition will not be obtrusive and will not affect the ability of adjacent properties to continue with their existing operations. The existing fire station is inadequate to house the number and size of fire trucks required to serve this area of south Secaucus. The proposed addition, which will be set back approximately 11 feet from the front façade of the existing fire station, will not limit sight distance into and out of the existing driveway. Although some truck maneuvering will occur in the County Avenue right-of-way during emergency incidents, existing pavement markings and an existing emergency traffic signal will stop vehicles traveling on County Avenue and the adjacent Public Service Electric and Gas (PSE&G) driveway, preventing any potential conflicts. Fire truck parking will continue to occur on-site within the existing structure and the new addition. The provision of air and light will not be adversely affected by the proposed addition either. The proposed building addition meets all required front, side, and rear yard setbacks limiting any visual impacts. Neighboring

properties will benefit from the increased level of emergency services provided. Furthermore, the proposed addition will improve area aesthetics by developing a currently vacant lot.

iii. The strict application of the regulations will result in peculiar and exceptional practical difficulties to, or exceptional and undue hardship upon, the property owner.

The strict application of the lot coverage requirement will result in peculiar and exceptional practical difficulties and undue hardship to the property owner. The existing building, which already exceeds the allowable lot cover limit for Lot 13, is not of adequate size to house additional fire trucks made necessary by the recent increase in residential development in the vicinity. A larger building would allow the fire station to operate more efficiently and may result in fewer time delays in responding to emergency calls.

The size, location and associated lot coverage of the existing building present challenges to providing a conforming and functional building addition of adequate size to provide increased emergency services. Compliance with the lot coverage requirement would result in a building addition with a footprint of only 1,612 square feet, which is not large enough to sufficiently house the additional fire trucks required to provide the necessary emergency services to the Town of Secaucus.

iv. The variance will not result in substantial detriment to the public good and will not adversely affect the public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity or general welfare.

The granting of the requested lot coverage variance will not result in substantial detriment to the public good and will not adversely affect the public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, or general welfare. The building addition will be similar in character to the existing structure located on the site and will not represent a significant change to neighborhood. Although larger in area than permitted by the regulations, the proposed addition meets all required setbacks and will not compromise the site's vehicular circulation as facility vehicles will continue to be able to safely access County Avenue. Neighboring properties will benefit from the proposed building addition, which will contribute to the public's safety by providing increased essential public services.

v. The variance will not have a substantial adverse environmental impact.

The granting of the requested lot coverage variance will not create any adverse environmental impacts. The proposed building addition will not disturb environmentally sensitive areas on the subject premises, as it is proposed to be constructed in an area that was previously developed with a multi-family residential dwelling. The proposed addition, which will result in a total 51 percent lot coverage on the site, will not exceed NJMC category A performance standards in regard to noise, vibrations, glare, air emissions, hazardous or radioactive materials, wastewater, traffic, etc. There

will be no storage of hazardous materials, liquids, or chemicals. The proposed development will provide a stormwater detention area for any increased quantity of runoff and will treat the stormwater in accordance with NJMC and NJDEP requirements. Additionally, the site will provide more than the minimum required amount of open space.

vi. The variance represents the minimum deviation from the regulations that will afford relief.

With the exception of the front yard loading and parking variances, the proposed fire station addition shall be in compliance with all other zoning criteria of the Neighborhood Commercial zone. The Neighborhood Commercial zone permits a maximum lot coverage of 40 percent, whereas the proposed building addition will result in a total lot coverage of 51 percent. However, the proposed lot coverage is consistent with the existing buildings in the vicinity of the site. The existing fire station, which is located on Lot 13, covers approximately 50 percent of that property. Providing a maximum lot coverage of 40 percent for both Lots 12 and 13 would result in a building addition with a footprint of only 1,612 square-feet, which is inadequate to address the storage and maintenance of a 9-foot by 47-foot fire truck. The proposed addition is of a sufficient size to to accommodate two such fire trucks. Additionally, the site will provide more than the required minimum amount of open space. Consequently, the requested variance represents the minimum deviation from the regulations that will afford relief.

vii. Granting the variance will not substantially impair the intent and purpose of these regulations.

The requested variance to construct an addition to the existing fire station with a total lot coverage of 51 percent, whereas a maximum of 40 percent is permitted, will not impair the intent and purpose of the regulations. The construction of many of the buildings in this neighborhood pre-dates the formation of the NJMC and its zoning regulations. As a result, there are several properties in the vicinity that exceed the current maximum lot coverage of 40 percent. Therefore, the proposed addition will not be uncharacteristic within the neighborhood.

By granting the variance, the existing fire station will be able to expand to become a more efficient operation. The fire station is centrally located in a densely developed municipality where large tracts of publically-owned land are not available. By expanding the existing fire station into available areas to accommodate the growing needs of the municipality, the interest of public safety is served. The building addition allows for the continued operation of the fire station in accordance with good planning principles that relate the layout of the improvements to the subject site and surrounding environs. The granting of the requested variance will contribute to and promote the intent of the NJMC Master Plan by allowing the site to be developed and utilized in a safe, orderly, and efficient manner.

B. Standards for the Granting of a Bulk Variance from the Provisions of N.J.A.C. 19:4-8.4(a)28, which requires one parking space per employee on the shift of maximum employment and one parking space per facility vehicle for essential public service uses. No on-site parking spaces are proposed.

The NJMC Zoning Regulations at N.J.A.C. Section 19:4-4.14(e) state in part that, *a variance shall not be granted unless specific written findings of fact directly based upon the particular evidence presented are made that support conclusions that...*

1. *Concerning bulk variances:*

- i. The variance requested arises from such condition that is unique to the property in question, is not ordinarily found in the same zone, and is not created by any action of the property owner or the applicant.*

The overall site is a square-shaped corner property approximately 0.24 acres in area, fronting County Avenue to the north and Lincoln Avenue to the west. A residential use is located to the south of the subject properties. A mixed-use, residential/commercial property is located east of the site. Lot 12 is undeveloped at the present time. Lot 13 is currently improved with a 4,156-square-foot fire station, which occupies approximately 50 percent of the site. The configuration of the existing building in relation to the limited available buildable area on the overall lot, as well as the required dimensions of the proposed addition's building envelope needed to accommodate specific emergency equipment, places constraints the site layout and design. Therefore, there is significantly less area on the site to accommodate accessory site requirements such as parking outside of the proposed building envelope than on typical properties in the same zone.

The existing fire house is set back 5.3 feet from the southerly lot line and the proposed addition is set back 10 feet from the easterly lot line. As such, neither area is of sufficient width to provide parking spaces along the sides of the building. If parking spaces were proposed in the rear of Lot 12, an access drive from either County Avenue or Lincoln Avenue would be necessary. In order to provide an access drive leading to the rear of Lot 12, a minimum of 26 feet (24-foot wide drive aisle plus a two-foot property line setback) would be required. Whereas, only 5.3 feet are available on the side of the building if entering the site from Lincoln Avenue and only 10 feet are proposed on the side of the proposed addition if entering the site from County Avenue, these widths are insufficient to provide a drive aisle from either street to the rear of Lot 12.

There is also an existing paved area located along the Lincoln Avenue side of the subject property, near the County Avenue intersection. In order to provide conforming parking spaces in this area, a minimum area that is 32 feet in width would be required. However, the existing building is set 21.5 feet off of the property line, eliminating the possibility of providing parking in this location.

Presently, no striped parking stalls are provided. Based on the applicant's testimony, a total of three parking spaces are required to accommodate the facility vehicles/fire trucks proposed to be located at the firehouse. No parking spaces are required based on the number of employees on the shift of maximum employment

since the fire station has no paid employees. All of the firefighters are volunteers and receive no salary. This is a unique use in that there are no permanent employees utilizing the building and, as such, no parking for employees is required. The fire station and its emergency vehicles are utilized during emergency events. The multi-purpose room on the second floor of the new addition will be used for firefighter-related functions only, and will not be utilized by any outside groups. The existing structure and the proposed building addition have been built and designed, respectively, to accommodate an essential public services use. Therefore, any risk in creating a future condition where the building could be utilized for another use that would exacerbate the parking deficit under the proposed configuration is improbable due to the specialized nature of the facility's use and because any such conversion would first require NJMC approval.

The applicant currently operates an existing fire station on the subject premises. The application proposes to upgrade the existing facility, as well as construct a new two-story, 5,550 square-foot building addition. At the present time, Washington Hook & Ladder Company #1 has one fire truck. Additional fire trucks are required in order to address the recent increase in residential development along Meadowland Parkway and at X-change Plaza in Secaucus. The proposed building addition is required to house and maintain the new equipment in working order.

- ii. *The granting of the variance will not adversely affect the rights of neighboring property owners or residents.*

The granting of the bulk variance to allow the construction of the firehouse addition without constructing any on-site parking spaces, will not adversely affect the rights of neighboring property owners or residents. The three fire trucks will be parked inside of the expanded firehouse in order to protect this essential equipment from vandalism and the elements. The applicant testified that volunteer firefighters will continue to park their personal vehicles on Lincoln Avenue. Most residences along Lincoln Avenue maintain driveways or garages to accommodate their own off-street parking. Even though the footprint of the existing fire station will be doubled by the construction of the building addition, it is anticipated that the volunteer firefighters will remain at their current levels. Therefore, on-street parking provided in the Lincoln Avenue right-of-way will adequately satisfy the demand for the facility.

- iii. *The strict application of the regulations will result in peculiar and exceptional practical difficulties to, or exceptional and undue hardship upon, the property owner.*

The strict application of these minimum parking regulations will result in peculiar and exceptional practical difficulties and undue hardship to the applicant. The proposed building addition is critical to address the recent increase in residential development along Meadowland Parkway and at X-change Plaza in Secaucus. Providing required parking on site would restrict the footprint of

the building addition, which in turn would limit the size and type of fire truck that could be housed in the new apparatus bays.

iv. The variance will not result in substantial detriment to the public good and will not adversely affect the public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity or general welfare.

The granting of the requested variance to provide no on-site parking spaces will not result in substantial detriment to the public good or adversely affect the general welfare. The proposed expansion of the existing fire station will enhance public safety by providing a valuable service to the community and allow municipal fire trucks to be parked inside the building addition. The expansion of the existing fire station is not anticipated to increase the number of firefighters utilizing the facility. As such, on-street parking provided along Lincoln Avenue will be adequate for the anticipated parking demand for the expanded fire station.

v. The variance will not have a substantial adverse environmental impact.

The granting of the requested variance to provide no on-site parking spaces will not result in any adverse environmental impacts. No environmentally sensitive areas will be disturbed. In addition, the NJMC's environmental performance standards for noise, glare, vibrations, airborne emissions, or hazardous materials will not be exceeded.

vi. The variance represents the minimum deviation from the regulations that will afford relief.

The granting of the requested variance to provide no on-site parking spaces represents the minimum deviation from NJMC regulations that will afford relief. The proposed building addition has been designed to accommodate fire trucks with a length of 47 feet, leaving no alternate locations on site for the installation of the required parking.

The fire station has no full-time employees, only volunteer firefighters that report to the facility during emergency incidents. All firefighters will continue to park their personal vehicles along Lincoln Avenue. No increases in volunteer levels are anticipated. Therefore, on-street parking in the Lincoln Avenue right-of-way will be adequate to satisfy the anticipated parking demand and will result in a safe and efficient operation.

vii. Granting the variance will not substantially impair the intent and purpose of these regulations.

The granting of the requested variance will not impair the intent and purpose of the regulations. The purpose of the Neighborhood Commercial zone is "to provide uses compatible with the scale and character of the neighboring residential areas, serving both residents and area employees." As the proposed variances will allow for the expansion of an existing fire station, it will promote development in accordance with good planning principles that relates the type, design and layout of such development to both the particular site and surrounding environment. The fire station is centrally located in a densely developed municipality where large

tracts of publically-owned land are not available. By expanding the existing fire station into available areas on adjacent Town-owned property to accommodate the growing needs of the municipality, the interest of the public is served. Additionally, it will provide for orderly and comprehensive development. To upgrade the 102-year old facility to address increased residential development along Meadowland Parkway and at X-change Plaza in Secaucus, additional equipment is required - the length of which dictates the size of the proposed addition.

Even though no exterior on-site parking will be provided, the fire station will be able to run efficiently. The three fire trucks will be parked in bays inside the building. The fire station has no permanent employees. Parking is only required on a temporary basis in response to emergency incidents. An existing curb cut along Lincoln Avenue will be replaced with full-face curb, increasing the amount of on-street parking provided. Should the need arise, additional firefighter parking is available at the municipal sports facility located within walking distance across County Avenue just southwest of the site. The site's visual and aesthetic appearance will not be degraded by the lack of on-site parking. The proposed addition and associated site improvements will contribute to and promote the intent of the NJMC regulations by allowing for the site to be redeveloped in a safe and orderly manner.

C. Standards for the Granting of a Bulk Variance from the Provisions of N.J.A.C. 19:4-8.3(b)1, which prohibits loading in any front yard. Two (2) loading doors are proposed in the front yard facing County Avenue.

The NJMC Zoning Regulations at N.J.A.C. Section 19:4-4.14(e) state in part that, *a variance shall not be granted unless specific written findings of fact directly based upon the particular evidence presented are made that support conclusions that...*

1. *Concerning bulk variances:*

- i. The variance requested arises from such condition that is unique to the property in question, is not ordinarily found in the same zone, and is not created by any action of the property owner or the applicant.*

The property in question is a square-shaped corner lot approximately 0.24 acres in area, fronting County Avenue to the north and Lincoln Avenue to the west. Lot 13 is currently improved with a 4,156-square-foot fire station, which occupies approximately 50 percent of that property. The location of the existing building is pre-existing non-conformity, set back just three feet from the County Avenue right-of-way. Any development of the property in question is affected by these conditions.

NJMC zoning regulations limit the placement of new loading doors and facilities to rear and side yards. The provision of new loading areas with adequate and appropriate building access and vehicle circulation is limited by the existing site configuration and building design.

The applicant is proposing to construct a 5,550-square-foot building addition to the existing fire station in order to address the need for increased emergency services in response to new residential development along Meadowland Parkway and at X-change Plaza in Secaucus. Two new loading areas, in the form of emergency apparatus storage bays, will be constructed in the front yard facing County Avenue adjacent to an existing nonconforming loading area.

The subject premises has two front yards, limiting possible locations for conforming loading areas to the easterly side yard and southerly rear yard. However, the provision of new loading spaces in the southerly rear yard and the easterly side yard is limited due to the location of the existing building and the proposed building addition, set back just 5.3 feet and 10 feet, respectively, from the adjacent lot lines. These pre-existing, non-conforming, and unique site and building conditions were not created by any action of the applicant or property owner.

- ii. The granting of the variance will not adversely affect the rights of neighboring property owners or residents.*

The neighborhood in which the subject property is located is primarily residential in nature. The property is bordered to the north and west by the County Avenue and Lincoln Avenue right-of-ways, respectively. The property to the south consists of a privately-owned multi-family dwelling, while the property to the east is developed with mixed-use residential/commercial buildings.

The granting of the requested variance will not adversely affect the rights of neighboring property owners or residents. Vehicles will continue to enter and exit the site from the curb-cut on County Avenue. The existing fire station, which was developed prior to the establishment of NJMC regulations, has nonconforming loading facilities located within the County Avenue and Lincoln Avenue front yards - the latter of which will be removed as part of this application. Notably, the proposed loading areas will be utilized only by fire trucks during emergency incidents. Although the proposed loading spaces will be located on the subject property, it is anticipated that some vehicle maneuvering will take place in the County Avenue right-of-way. However, possible conflicts between fire trucks and those vehicles traveling along County Avenue will be avoided by the utilization of existing emergency traffic signals.

The proposed improvements will not create any negative visual impacts to neighboring properties or impede their ability to function as intended. The property directly across County Avenue facing the proposed loading areas is already developed with a two-story commercial building with associated parking operated by PSE&G. An ingress/egress driveway to one of these parking areas is located along County Avenue opposite the proposed loading areas. However, an existing traffic signal prevents vehicular traffic from exiting the PSE&G property during emergency incidents. Since the addition will be set back 11 feet from the property line, it is anticipated that the fire trucks utilizing the two proposed loading doors will not need to utilize the vehicular use area on the PSE&G property for maneuvering, as is necessary for fire trucks exiting the

existing firehouse door facing County Avenue. Placing the proposed loading areas, for use as fire truck storage bays, within the front yard facing County Avenue will not adversely affect the rights of neighboring property owners or residents.

iii. The strict application of the regulations will result in peculiar and exceptional practical difficulties to, or exceptional and undue hardship upon, the property owner.

The strict application of the regulations that prohibit front yard loading will result in practical difficulties in the construction of a fire house building addition on a lot with two front yards. In balancing the requirements of the Neighborhood Commercial zone with the particular characteristics of the property, the proposed variance is required to accommodate a functional building and site layout. Fire stations in urban areas typically have front yard loading characteristics. The proposed loading areas will be constructed adjacent to an existing loading area, which represents a comprehensive and consolidated site layout.

Alternative site layouts, such as placing the loading areas along the southerly or easterly sides of the proposed addition are restricted by the footprint of the proposed addition, which is constrained by the size requirements of the fire trucks to be housed there, and the location of the existing fire station. The existing building is set back just 5.3 feet from the southerly lot line, which does not provide adequate room for emergency vehicles to enter or exit the site. Reducing the footprint of the proposed addition to provide loading areas on the easterly portion of the site is not feasible as this

measure would require the significant redesign of the internal configuration of the existing building and proposed addition. The proposed addition has been designed to accommodate fire trucks with a length of approximately 47 feet. Vehicles of this size would not have adequate maneuvering area in the side yard and would require multiple turning movements to enter/exit the proposed loading areas, costing first-responders valuable time during emergency incidents.

No deliveries by truck will be made at the proposed loading doors. The proposed loading doors will be utilized for emergency purposes only. Therefore, the strict application of zoning regulations results in practical difficulties in development of the property.

iv. The variance will not result in substantial detriment to the public good and will not adversely affect the public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity or general welfare.

There will be no substantial detriment to the public good and no adverse impacts to the public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity or general welfare by the granting of the requested variance. The placement of the loading areas within the front yard facing County Avenue as proposed is required to provide functional site circulation and will have no adverse impact on public safety or health as adequate light, air, and open space will continue to be supplied.

The location of the proposed loading areas permits vehicles to enter/exit the proposed addition and safely maneuver on and off the site. Existing emergency traffic signals will stop traffic from County Avenue and the PSE&G driveway while fire trucks maneuver into and out of the proposed loading areas. Additionally, public safety is improved by the expansion of the fire station.

The proposed plan ensures proper circulation and reduces the potential for on and off-site vehicular conflicts. In addition, excess noise, odor, vibration, or glare will not be generated as a result of the proposed loading areas. The proposed loading areas are only utilized during emergency incidents. Therefore, it is anticipated that the number of vehicle trips generated by the proposed addition will not cause any significant changes to current traffic patterns or peak demands.

v. The variance will not have a substantial adverse environmental impact.

The granting of the requested variance will not have any adverse environmental impacts. The location of the proposed loading areas within the front yard facing County Avenue will not cause the NJMC's performance standards regarding noise, vibrations, airborne emissions, hazardous materials, glare or water quality to be exceeded.

vi. The variance represents the minimum deviation from the regulations that will afford relief.

The requested variance represents the minimum deviation from the regulations that will afford relief. The applicant is proposing two loading areas in the front yard facing County Avenue, one for each new fire pump truck. No additional loading areas are being requested. Neither of the proposed loading areas will be used for the loading or unloading of commercial vehicles.

The subject premises fronts County Avenue to the north and Lincoln Avenue to the west. Potential locations to provide an alternative loading area outside of a front yard are limited due to existing site layout, front yard restrictions, internal building configuration and turning/maneuvering requirements of the fire trucks. The proposed loading areas have been situated to ensure the safe and efficient operation of the fire station, necessitating its location facing County Avenue.

vii. Granting the variance will not substantially impair the intent and purpose of these regulations.

The proposed loading areas within the front yard facing County Avenue will not impair the intent and purpose of the regulations. The proposed loading areas satisfy NJMC regulations at N.J.A.C. 19:4-8.3(a)4, which require that loading areas consider safe and efficient layout, consistency with the size and proposed use of the facility, and pedestrian/vehicular circulation. The placement of the proposed loading areas within the front yard results in a more efficient site layout with appropriate access provided for emergency equipment. Except for emergency incidents, the proposed loading door will be closed, improving area aesthetics.

The fire station is centrally located in a densely developed municipality where large tracts of publically-owned land are not available. By expanding the existing facility into available areas to accommodate the growing needs of the municipality, the interest of public safety is served. Through the use of sound planning practices, the proposed loading areas will contribute to and promote the intent of the NJMC Master Plan by allowing for the site to be developed and utilized in a safe and orderly manner.

V. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

- A. Standards for the Granting of a Bulk Variance from the Provisions of N.J.A.C. 19:4-5.43(a)1, which permits a maximum lot coverage of 40 percent. A lot coverage of 51 percent is proposed.

Based on the record in this matter, the bulk variance application to construct a 5,550 square-foot building addition to the Washington Hook & Ladder Company #1 facility, which has a footprint of 2,795 square feet, with a proposed lot coverage of 51 percent, whereas a maximum lot coverage of 40 percent is permitted, is hereby recommended for approval.

APPROVAL

Recommendation on
Variance Request

8-23-12

Date



Sara J. Sundell, P.E., P.P.
Director of Land Use Management

approval

Recommendation on
Variance Request

8/23/12

Date



Marcia A. Karrow
Executive Director

B. Standards for the Granting of a Bulk Variance from the Provisions of N.J.A.C. 19:4-8.4(a)28, which requires one parking space per employee on the shift of maximum employment and one parking space per facility vehicle for essential public service uses. No on-site parking spaces are proposed.

Based on the record in this matter, the bulk variance application to construct a 5,550 square-foot building addition to the Washington Hook & Ladder Company #1 facility with no on-site parking provided, whereas a minimum of one parking space per employee on the shift of maximum employment and one parking space per facility vehicle for essential public service uses is required, is hereby recommended for approval.

<u>APPROVAL</u>	<u>8-23-12</u>	
Recommendation on Variance Request	Date	Sara J. Sundell, P.E., P.P. Director of Land Use Management

<u>Approval</u>	<u>8/23/12</u>	
Recommendation on Variance Request	Date	Marcia A. Karrow Executive Director

C. Standards for the Granting of a Bulk Variance from the Provisions of N.J.A.C. 19:4-8.3(b)1, which prohibits loading in any front yard. Two loading doors are proposed in the front yard facing County Avenue.

Based on the record in this matter, the bulk variance application to construct a 5,550 square-foot building addition to the Washington Hook & Ladder Company #1 facility with two loading doors in the front yard facing County Avenue, whereas loading in any front yard is prohibited, is hereby recommended for approval.

<u>APPROVAL</u>	<u>8-23-12</u>	
Recommendation on Variance Request	Date	Sara J. Sundell, P.E., P.P. Director of Land Use Management

<u>approval</u>	<u>8/23/12</u>	
Recommendation on Variance Request	Date	Marcia A. Karrow Executive Director